Name of the Candidate : Manusmriti Sharma

ID No : 2012PhDENGG008

Place of Research Work &

Organization : JKLU,Jaipur

Proposed Supervisor Details-

Name : Dr. Sanjay Kumar

Qualification : Ph.D.

Designation : Associate Professor

Organization : JKLU, Jaipur

Proposed Topic of Research: *Going Beyond Gender Parochialism : A Trans-Feministic Comparative Study of the Selected Works of Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri*

Background of the Proposed Research:

Objectives:

The main objectives to be taken up in the proposed research are as follows:

- To understand and analyze how contemporary feminist writers such as Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri have infused a fresh wave of feministic fiction in India by transcending gender parochialism.
- To explore the complex patterns of ubiquitous predicament of an individual as observed in the selected works.

- To study and to provide a comparative analysis of the selected works and to establish the issue of free will, existential void, dysfunctional human relationship and cultural rootlessness in the works of the selected authors.
- To establish how Modern Feministic Fiction has been attempting to break free from the circumscribing feminist vision by taking a more holistic and more universal approach.
- To draw parallels and proselytes among the selected writers and to compare and contrast the kaleidoscopic world created on the literary landscape of the novelists.
- To observe and establish how through their trans-feministic works the writers such as Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri usher in a new name of feministic fiction that moves decisively from the stated feministic stance to a more comprehensive and all encompassing humanistic position.

Introduction:

In the modern epoch the newly awakened human mind is caught in fast paced changes in every aspect of life. The dilemmas and the quests of a modern man trapped in this materialistic world cuts him from the peace provided by traditional quays and spiritual bays. In this contemporary diseased world where discontents grow their own pestilential vapours a human being stands isolated and alienated facing many conflicts and changes due to moral issues, existential questions , spiritual confusions and psychological battles at multiple levels of human consciousness. Owing to this in literature also there is a gradual shift of focus from the external world to the inner world of an individual. Earlier the main aim of the women writers, across the world was to show the subjugation and discrimination faced by women in this male dominated society. The issues related to women's position and subjugation have their roots in feminism and its various theories which started in 1872 when **Alexander Dumas** coined the phrase "feminism". In 1928, **Virginia Woolf** delivered a modest lecture- *A Room of One's Own* which talked about the status and role of women. **Simon de Beauvoir's** *The Second Sex* in 1949-50 concentrates on facts and myths about women. The first sentence of the book "*one is not born rather becomes a woman"* invited a hot discussion across the world.

A decade and a half later, **Betty Friedan** in 1963 made an another important contribution with her book *The Feminist Mystique* where she analyzed and criticized the roles of educators, psychologists, sociologists in controlling women to believe that they could find fulfillments only as housewives and mothers. Feminism developed a large body of literature analyzing the economical, psychological, educational, social and emotional roots of female subordination.By 1970 more radical feminist writing reached to the public with the publication of **Germaine Geere's** *The Female Eunuch* and **Kate-Millet's** *Sexual Politics* .These books argued the gender distinction structure in every aspect of an woman's life. These works attributed female oppression by men and lambasted an ideology of male supremacy. **Elaine Showalter** *A Literature of Their Own : British Women Novelist from Bronte to Lessing* (1977) and in a lecture

delivered by her entitled *Towards a Feministic Poetics* also tried to achieve an emancipated world for women.

Feminist literature is also one of such reflections which focuses on the expression of the mute and shifted female voice denied an equal freedom of self-expression. Passing through various phases thus feminist literature has exploded into various moods and shades. Keeping in consonance with such socio-political discourse feminist literary works focus on the position of women: the discrimination, subjugation, harassment and silence faced by them. The writers have plunge into the deeper recesses of their characters and depicted not only the external traumas but also the internal turmoil of a woman with feminine sensibility but now there is a gradual shift in the works of the writers. The literature produced by Indian Women Writers in the recent past ventures to go beyond the stated feministic stance and have shown reflections of multiple crisis faced by their characters as individuals. It seems now instead of following the tradition of feministic writing some authors' preoccupation is to study so many other shades like social, economical, political, educational, legal and cultural. No doubt, a surface reading of their works supplies a feministic hue but a deeper insight brings out several other factors affecting the lives of the characters irrespective of their gender. These writers have shifted their outlook from gender specific angst to such as Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Das, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai,Anita Nair, Kiran Desai, Githa Hariharan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Mashewari Dutta, Rama Mehta, Jaishree Mishra have a much rounded view where the oppressed and the oppressor are equally victims of the circumstances that surround them.It is not only the quest and the dilemma of a woman rather it is a journey of an individual who is battling against all this. To assess the works done by these writers in the parameters of only feminism is limiting their creativity. As Shashi Deshpande says in an interview : *My writing has been categorized as writing about women or feministic writing. In this process, much in it has been missed. I have been denied the place and dignity of a writer who is dealing with issues that are human issues, of interest to all humanity.*

These writers have an anguish when their works are labeled as feministic works. Women writers of all ages have natural preferences for writing about women characters but to put such preferences in a specific category is to ignore the talent of their creativity. These labels are hardly reassuring and they are limiting as well. When we read a writer through labels, we neither read the literary work fully, nor do we get a complete picture of the authors' pre occupations. Far beyond feministic issues, there are moral issues, existential questions, spiritual confusions and psychological battles, emotional and social upheaval which are disturbing the minds of the authors and they set a journey straight into their characters whether male or female mind and heart applying insight and reason.

The proposed research takes up four such Indian feministic writers Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur and Jhumpa Lahiri who seem to be breaking free from the prevailing feministic vision and are trying to delineate their works in a universal hue. The study observes through their works the multiple and variegated shades of human life as these writers focus on

- Urvashi Sinha in her article the edited work by T.M.J. Indra Mohan *Shashi Deshpande's Small Remedies :A Journey Towards Selfhood takes up the issue of subjugation and self awareness in the women characters of Shashi Deshpande at length.*
- *P.G.Joshi in his work Shashi Deshpande's Fiction :A Study in Women Empowerment and Post Colonial* Discourse shows the defiance of her main protagonists in the course of their self-upliftment.
- Usha Tambe in her edited work by Nilufer E.Bharucha and Vila Sarang *Shashi Deshpande as a Feminist and a Novelist ,Indian English Fiction :An Assessment* talks about the confusions and dilemmas of Deshpandes characters and how do they co-ordinate with all and save themselves from further fragmentation and depletion.
- *K.V.Raghupati Self-Assertion of Woman :Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows :The Indian Novel With Specific Purpose* focuses upon the lives of her female protagonists full of problems and tortures yet with some scope for growth and grace.
- Neeru Chakravertty in her book, *Quest for Self –Fulfillment in the Novels of Anita Desai* examines the plight of various characters of her as individuals caught up in their self deluding and self limiting theories of life.
- A.Das in his book, *Anita Desai: A Critical Study* chronologically examines the novels of Anita Desai. The book excels in formally analyzing the character and situation relationship in the overall context of the feminine psyche.
- Neeru Tandon in her book, *Anita Desai and Her Fictional World* has included certain burning topics of the day such as male-female dichotomy, existentialist vision, religion and culture, concept of marriage and narrative technique in the fictions of Anita Desai.
- Madhusudan Prasad in his essay T*he Novels of Anita Desai :A* Study in Imagery has interpreted her imagery chiefly anticipatory, pre figurative or demonstrative in nature .he also talks about the interrelatedness and continuity of her image patterns.
- M.Rajeshwar in his insightful essay *Superstition and Psyche in Anita Desai's Cry the Peacock* talks about the superstitious belief depicted by Desai helping her characters immensely in the process of unconsciously identifying their problems psychologically most balanced minds
- J.P.Tripathi in his *Mind and Art of Anita Desai* observes that she possesses one of the healthiest and psychologically most balanced rinds in the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction. He emulates the sanity of her tastes and attitudes, in spite of the weltschmerz or the mood of melancholy in the characters in her novels.
- Ashok Kumar in his *Social web and Cry for Self :A Critical Analysis of Manju Kapur* talks about the image of her female protagonists as suffering but stoic women who are eventually breaking traditional boundaries .
- Ruby Mihoutra *in Existential image of Women in Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters* focuses on the internal as well as external conflicts of all the women characters of the novel :Kasturi,Viramati,Ganga and Ida.
- Mithu Banerjee talks about the depiction of lesbianism in Manju Kapur's novel and shows Kapur's rendition of a lesbian relationship sometimes distracts the readers from the tensions of the situation and the core sensibilities of the characters.
- Sushila Singh in her work assesses that through her protagonists Kapur offers a frontal challenge to patriarchal thought, social organization and control her inner potential.

- Seema Malik focuses on the truthful and candid manner of Kapur in which she presents her women and the challenges they face in their personal, professional, religious and social-political levels.
- Pushp lata in her critique paper of Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters traces the protagonist's journey from semblance of clarity to utter chaos and confusion.
- Najmeh Nouri in his paper *Floating World :Re-Imagining Rhizomatic Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake* examines the novel from the framework of transnationalism characterzed by migration,transculturationand hybridity in both first generation and second generation.
- R.K.Dhawan in *Writers of Indian Diaspora* talks about the loneliness ,a deep sense of remorse and emotional isolation faced by the characters of the author.
- D.Mishra *New Diasporic Voices in the Inheritance of Loss* focuses on the impact of the loss of roots , language and social norms as depicted in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri.
- Kalpna Rajput in her book, *Remapping the Female Map: Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur* makes a feministic study of the novels of the authors and discusses at length the women characters of them reshaping their identities.
- Lavina Dhingra and Floyd Cheung in their edited work *Naming Jhumpa Lahiri : Canons and Controversies* talks about different canons and controversies of Lahiri's works.
- *David Kippen has full praise for Lahiri's selection of characters which she chooses from all the classes and shows Lahiri writing about the Indian American experience from all the angles In indelible, lifelike stories.*

Gap in the Existing Research:

Like the all research work done, this particular research work going to be done has its own gap. There can be various books and writers to be researched upon but specifically these four writers have been taken as they had attained a unique stature by depicting not only the feministic shades of their characters but taking them to a new height by depicting the multiple shades of educational, existential, social, economical and cultural setting. No doubt , they have expressed their serious concern through the depiction of their women characters and have expressed restlessness with the traditional positioning of women but in the end without showing any obvious favour to their women characters they have transcended their works through all the boundaries of gender and this attribute makes them worth researching upon As the motive of this research is to show a comparative study on the writers as the imminent voices of the a human being's anguished cry in order to explore the underlying fact of basic human predicament which can be social, existential, emotional and cultural and not just feministic. The literature on these authors is extensive and much of it provides an insight to see the feministic shades in their works. There have been a number of studies documenting the predicament of indian women placed between contradictory identities, the theme of silence, gender differences, passive sufferings and familial relationships have been researched upon but my research will be based upon a comparative study of such variation and the manner in which they come out to be the true ambassadors of transcending their works from the borders of feministic ramparts. The works which are chosen for the study are among those which are studied in the light of feministic shade but my study shall try to prove that besides dealing with the issues related to women subordination and their different levels of struggle, these writers have also explored the various

the social setting,political milieu,, cultural rootlessness, existential void & vacuum, the dysfunctional human relationship.

Shashi Deshpande seems to stir the emotions of her readers by depicting the themes and issues arising from the situation of women at the cross-roads of a transitional society, changing from traditional to modern. Her protagonists are truly in search of inner strength they have the power to introspect and rebel and in the rebellion they assert free will. In Manju Kapur's novels the crisis faced by her characters appears to be more social than feministic. The running thread in all her work is the complexity of human relationship and the dysfunctionality arising bewilderment and chaos in her characters. Anita Desai's works seem to exhibit a strong portrayal of human predicament by voicing the silent miseries and helplessness of her characters who are tormented by existential void and vacuum. Jhumpa Lahiri's modern approach is evident in her themes as well as in narrative style. She appears to be engaging herself In exploring the issues related to cultural rootlessness like the immigrant experience, the clash of the cultures, the conflicts of assimilation and the tangled ties between the generations in her novels. Observed thus, it seems that the works of all these writers are far too variegated and multi-dimensional to be interpreted through the circumscribing feministic prism.

Literature Review of the Proposed Research:-

Before proceeding forward it is essential to look at the critical works produced on these writers .These writers are highly researched people and a lot of has been said and written about them .Also there are numerous papers published in the journals and some essays in the view of the works done upon the writers .They are numerous in numbers so some of them are detailed below:

- Kamini Dinesh in her book *That Long Silence :The Narrator and The Narrative* analyses the different types of narrative techniques used by Shashi Deshpande.
- Jasbir Jain in her book, *Gendered Realities, Human Spaces: The Writing of Shashi Deshpande* works through a close reading of Deshpande's fiction, her non-fiction and interviews in order to interrogate the strengths and limits of 'feminist' positions. It goes on to free Deshpande's work from a reading confined only to the woman question and opens it out to aesthetic evaluations and socio cultural history.
- Siddhartha Sharma in his book, *Shashi Deshpande's Novels: A Feministic Study* seeks to study the feminist perspective in Shashi Deshpande's novels. A culture-specific approach has been adopted to unravel *Shashi* Deshpande's pragmatic resolution related to the modern Indian woman's beleaguered existence.
- Sarbjit k Sandhu in his book, *The Image of Woman in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande* reveals Deshpande's sincerity and ability in voicing the concerns of the urban educated middle-class woman.

traumas and ordeals as well as the conflicts and confusions at the multiple levels of human consciousness .The proposed research ventures to elaborately discuss, analyze and bring to the fore such deeper sensibilities and subtleties of all these writers so as to appreciate their contribution. Though there are isolated works done on these authors but comparative analysis has not been done.

Plan /Methodology:

The plan to be followed in this research will move around the study of the selected works of four women writers Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur, Anita Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri. The methodology applied in this research is very simple and straight in its approach.The entire research revolves around seeing these four writers as the spokeswomen of fresh wave of feministic fiction who seem to transcend their works from the gender ramparts.

Tentative Chapterization:

1.Introduction:

An overview of feminism,feministic theories, major critical theories,shift in the settled feminist psyche will be elaborately discussed.

2. Shashi Deshpande:Free Will

This chapter shall discuss the selected works of the authors in the light of free will. The journey of her protagonist in search of their strength,their power to introspect and rebel and in their rebellion the assertion of their free will shall be discussed at length.

3.Anita Desai:Existential Void

This chapter shall discuss the existential void and vacuum in the characters of selected works of the author.it will focus on the tumultuous existential struggles and void engulfing the lives of her characters irrespective of their gender.

4.Manju Kapur:Dysfunctional Human Relationship

The chapter shall bring to fore the dysfunctionality in the relationship of the characters of the selected works of Manju Kapur.The issues of inter-religious marriage, familial bond, male-female bond ,co-existence of past and present shall be discussed elaborately.

5.Jhumpa Lahiri: Cultural Rootlessness

The chapter shall discuss the modern approach of the author in dealing with the issues related to cultural rootlessness,clash of culture, the conflict of assimilation and tangled ties between the generation.

6.Feminism in Post-Modern Time:Parallels and Proselytes

The chapter shall be a comparative study of the style,structure, content applied in the selected works of the authors.

7.Conclusion

References :

Primary Sources:

- Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* Ghaziabad: Penguin Books,1990
- Deshpande, Shashi .*The Long Silence*, Penguin Books: New Delhi,1989

- Desai, Anita *Cry the Peacock*, New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks,1980.
- Desai, Anita Boumgarten's Bombay, New Delhi: Harmondsworth: Penguin,1988
- Kapur, Manju. *Difficult Daughters*, New Delhi:Penguin Books:New Delhi,1998
- Kapur,Manju. *A Married Woman*,New Delhi:India Ink.2002

- Lahiri, Jhumpa. The Namesake. New Delhi :Harper Collins Publishers,2004
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Interpreter of Maladies*, New Delhi :Harper Collins, India.1999

Secondary Sources:

- Beauvior,Simon de *The Second Sex* .trans.and ed.H.M.Parshley 1953;rpt.London:Vintage Classics,1997.
- Banerjee,Mithuhttp://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003/feb/23/fiction.features/. 23 Feb 2003. Sunday July 30,2013.
- Chakraverty, Neeru. *Quest for Self –Fulfillment in the Novels of Anita Desai:* Authors Press.2003.01 ed.
- Das,A. *Anita Desai: A Critical Study :* Omega Publications. 2011

- Dhingra Lavina and and Cheung Floyd *Naming Jhumpa Lahiri : Canons and Controversaries:Lexigton Books Publishers.2012*
- Dinesh, Kamini *That Long Silence :The Narrator and The Narrative,Contemporary Indian Fiction in Englished.*Avdesh K. Singh,New Delhi:Creative ,1993
- Greere,Gremaine The Female Eunuch
- Jain,Jasbir. *Gendered Realities, Human Spaces: The Writing of Shashi Deshpande.* International Specialized Book Service Incorporated, 2003.
- Joshi. P.G.Shashi Deeshpande's Fiction:A Study in Women Empowerment And Postcolonial Discourse New Delhi :Prestige Books,2003
- Kippen,David Interpreting Indian Culture with Stories San Francisco Chronicle,24 June,1999.
- Prasad, Madhusudan. T*he Novels of Anita Desai :A Study in Imagery* :Feminist English Literature,Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi,1999.
- Rajeshwar,M. *Superstition and Psyche in Anita Desai's Cry the Peacock* Feminist English Literature,Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi,1999.
- Rajput,Kalpna. *Remapping the Female Map: Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur :* Yking Books Publishers, 2012
- Raghupati K.V. Self-Assertion of Woman :Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows
- Sharma,Siddhartha. *Shashi Deshpande's Novels: A Feministic Study: Atlantic Books Publishers.2004*
- Sinha, Urvashi..*Shashi Deshpande's Small Remedies:A journey Towards Selfhood Shashi Deshpande :A Critical Spectrum*,ed. TMJ Indra Mohan New Delhi:Atlantic Publishers,2004
- Singh,Sushila. Feminine Assertion in Manju Kapur's A M arried Woman,The Indian Journal of English Studies,R.K.Dhawan ed,New Delhi Vol. 41,2003
- Sandhu ,Sarbjit K.*The Image of Woman in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande* :Prestige Books, 1991
- Tandon, Neeru. , *Anita Desai and Her Fictional World*: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors .*2013*
- Tambe, Usha Shashi Deshpande as a feminist and a novelist ,Indian English Fiction 1980-90An Assessment eds.Nilufer E.Bharucha and Vila Sarang New Delhi:BR Publishing Corporation,1994